



NEW YORK WOMEN AND HOTELITIS

In This City of the Homeless Home the Fascination of the Glittering Hotel Has Overcome Even the Most Staid, and at the Present Outlook Nothing Can Take Its Place

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TELL me where she eats and I will tell you who she is.

Eating is one of the most thoroughly approved pastimes of all within the gates of New York. With an ever increasing number it comes close to being an occupation.

Now that woman refuses to stay at home and cook meals for the men as in those good days of yore she "adores to eat hotel victuals," as an elderly transplanted New England woman phrased it. You behold her thus engaged in the gorgeous dining rooms of the famed hotels of the metropolis and in the obscure restaurants which boast foods of foreign flavor and atmosphere.

After all, it is atmosphere that woman is seeking. It is the lure that summons Eve's daughters from the familiar shelter of their homes to the more or less emblazoned caravansaries.

A man goes where he can get the best food or the most of it for his money. With a woman these are minor considerations. To be sure, she may "love" a certain kind of decorative salad or be "crazy about" a frozen sweet concoction to be found at one place or another, but it is less the gustatory pleasure that she craves than the joy of eating something bearing the hall mark of popularity in a place so crowded that the chances of her getting a table seem hopeless.

But, on the whole, the food is a trivial incident to the woman who frequents hotels. Her delight in them is a part of her emancipation. The dunkey who turns the heavy plate glass revolving doors admits her to a world until recently denied her, by the proprieties, at least. The warm air, heavy with the mingled odors of toilet perfumes and of viands, is pleasant to her nostrils. She is stimulated to accentuate her own attractions by contact with women for whom fashion has done its utmost.

The receding halls invite her to banquets, exhibitions, polite entertainment and the soulful exchange of ideas on politics, literature and dress. Name your dearest fad and the hotel will yield up something bearing upon it.

There are still a few women so hopelessly attached to the fading notion that it is a little vulgar for well bred members of their sex to mingle on terms of equality with strangers in public places that they strongly decry "hotelitis." But it's a hopeless protest, growing constantly weaker. What's the use? If women have adopted the hotel, that's all there is to it. Just as when they really want the ballot or anything else they will have it, man asserts.

The Masterful One.

The hotel is one of the perquisites of the woman of the day who has taken affairs into her own hands and is running them to suit her notions of salvation or desperation, leaving teachers and preachers agape with dismayed astonishment.



"Admits Her to a World Until Recently Denied to Her"

The hotel offers her one of the most appreciated instruments for breaking traditional bonds without losing caste or courting discredit. Its influences are as varied as they are numerous. Even the most timid and conservative of dames finds nothing objectionable in attending meetings in a private room of a reputable hotel for sweet charity's sake, for school reunions or for civic betterment councils. A sedate luncheon may form a part of these mild affairs, and the toasts—without wine—are as decorous as the most prudish could prescribe.

The hotel is vastly convenient in these days of cramped quarters and widely scattered unhomelike homes. That is its primal insinuating plea. When the woman's club began to be a force the house to house meetings held in its first stages became impracticable, and the hotel offered facilities not otherwise obtainable. Its attractions, added to those inherent in the club, drew new members.

There was an element of excitement in the setting of such a meeting that the club per se could not furnish. Yet there was safety in numbers. Members who had never as individuals ventured inside Sherry's, Delmonico's, the Waldorf-Astoria and other places about whose games there was a peculiar glamour were emboldened to enjoy their privileges under the protecting aegis of the club's shield. Something of the retiring habits of the home keeping woman for a time still clung to these hotel club meetings. The members of one complacent organization, for instance, were shocked and angered at the public criticism of their best bonnets—an outrage on their privacy and their taste.

But the hotel environment began to have its effect. Or, perhaps, it was only co-incidental with other liberalizing influences. In any case, rumors of indulgence in the wicked cocktail and the frank discussion of forbidden subjects reached the ears of scandalized

husbands and came near to disrupting certain clubs. People were more squeamish then. It would be hard to make a sensation out of such doings in the hotels to-day.

What organized women could do, it followed that the individual might take up, sooner or later. Having tested the convenience and the pleasures of dalliance in the luxury of hotels, women of varying fortunes and positions swarmed into them, defying criticism.

Another contributing element to this end has been the elimination of housekeeping, in the old time sense. Neither the responsibility nor the charm of the house has a hold upon the mistress in Manhattan. At best there is an apartment, and even the strain of keeping it up is too severe for thousands who won't work and can't get servants.

The next step is the hotel, if you can afford it. Perhaps the most discontented women in the world are those who live in hotels, but they are ruined for leading any other sort of life.

Moths That Flutter.

But it is the outside moths that flutter most conspicuously about the many candled power glitter of the hotel. Where do they get the price and the time? The sober minded and the casual visitors who ask these questions receive no answer, but the extreme of fashion and its imitations continue to parade and loiter, to shimmer and glisten, and to spend money madly and gladly. "Whither" and "whence" are questions for the caustic observer, not for the woman with the well filled, gold meshed purse—seldom for the man who fills it.

There are women who enjoy the privileges of the hotels at comparatively small expense. It is they who most freely use the gilt stamped stationery, engage the services of the hotel maids and utilize the free dressing rooms. Their luncheons or their teas are carefully thought out with an eye to the prices on the menu even at a sacrifice of preference in regard to dishes. Better the least expensive entrée and a demitasse in the luxury of a hotel of class than the cycle of a table d'hôte in the commonplace cheapness of the ordinary restaurant. Women are not greedy in the matter of food when they pay for it themselves, but they are "dinnicky."

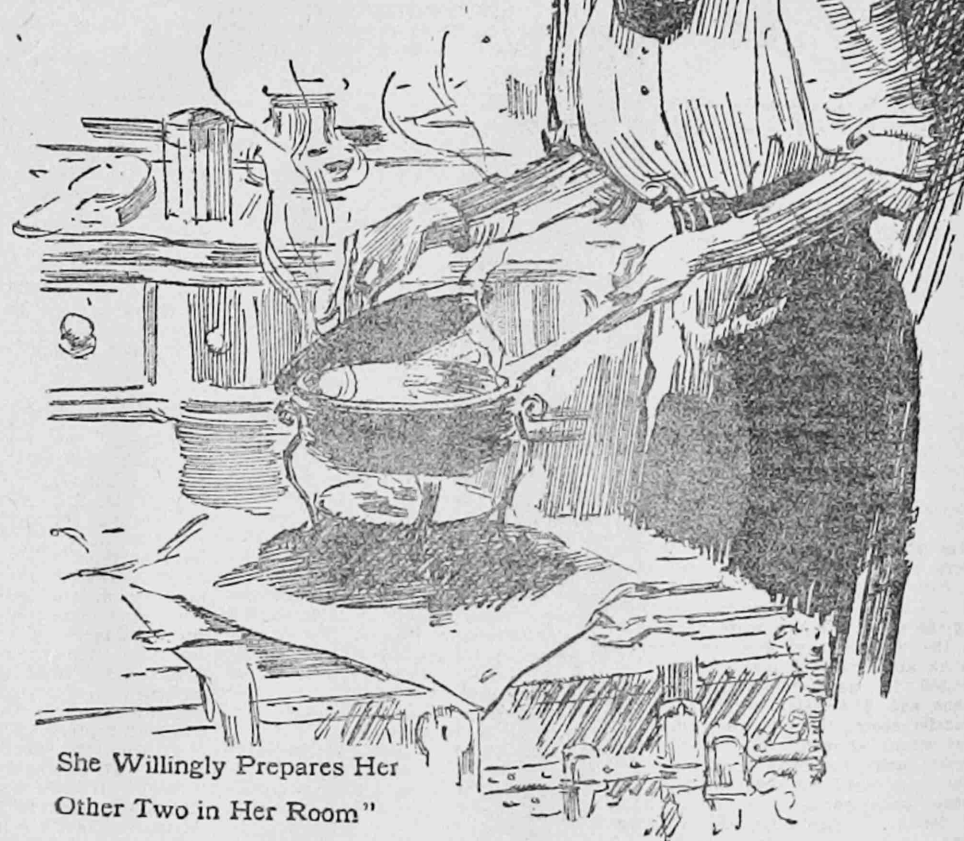
There cannot be any direct profit to the hotels in this class of patrons, but it would be impolitic as well as cruel on the part of the management to cold-shoulder them, for they are the hotel's most insistent advertisers.

Sitting at ease among the well groomed, finely clad loungers of the hotels or trailing past them unperturbed in their graceless, travel soiled garb are hungry motoring parties—a large addition to the patronage of the hotels nowadays.

The usual congestion becomes acute on such special occasions as the aviation meet and the horse show and the days when people are passing through the city to and from the seashore and the mountains. Then the privilege of parting from a great deal of

money for a very small portion of food is denied to hundreds, who go away weary and disappointed after hours of fruitless waiting.

Even on ordinary days, at least they are ordinary in so far as general information goes, tables are set in the lobby and in the reading room to catch so much of the overflow from the dining rooms and the palm rooms as it is possible to accommodate. As the last flower is fastened in the big centerpiece by the hurried



She Willingly Prepares Her Other Two in Her Room"

florist the final ornate mayonnaise and gelée placed upon the cold board and the first note of Broadway's favorite music of the hour struck by the orchestra, the head waiter and his assistants deftly guide one lunch party after another and now and then a solitary person, first to the tables by the windows, then to the others, until even the least desirable places are filled—and the crowd stands, many deep, waiting a favorable nod.

In general you will count five or six, often many more women for every man. And that man would not be there, especially if he had to wait, unless a woman's wish compelled him.

Place for Meeting.

The hotel is the great meeting place. If one comes from Summit and another from Oyster Bay it is quite logical that they should plan to meet at a hotel. Before the matinee, or after it, to join forces for shopping; to rest up after the dentist; to show what New York really is to a kinswoman from Kansas or from New Hampshire; to talk over a matter of business with some one whose time is limited—for these

and a score of other purposes the hotel serves with a peculiar adaptation to the day's conditions that ranks it high in the hearts of women.

"How much it all costs!" exclaimed a somewhat dismayed woman, unaccustomed to hotels, as she saw five dollars fade away over an extremely simple luncheon.

"Yes, but it's worth it," quoted her friend gaily. "You can't be economical at a hotel, and to be mean is intolerable, but you have a glow of satisfaction in having spent your money here which it is hard to match."

The woman who has formed the hotel habit feels that existence would be unendurably drab without this purple patch, and however much prices may soar and portions be reduced she clings to it.

Since the club meetings have fallen, if not into desuetude, at least into the background, in the feminine parade at the hotels there are scores of other appealing interests, from Blabette's showing and sale of the latest millinery creations and Mme. Suprême's modes to talks on "The Last Days of the Empire," and from the sale of the wares of the demurely apparelled Shakers to musical mornings, fashionably patronized.

Beneath the generous shelter of the roof one may find hairdressers, manicures, stenographers and every sort of helper, attendant and servant that moderns crave and money pays for.

But there are hotels and hotels, each with its distinctive reputation and its following. About the most conspicuous retail shops have pressed—some of the important large ones that have moved up town within a few years, and little specialty shops where the rich may buy at least with a belief in exclusive quality. Tea rooms offer to supplement the big hotel dining rooms at almost the same prices. Beauty parlors are conveniently at hand. The charm of the avenue is on one side, and the other extends toward the glare of Broadway.

Here is always the greatest hotel crowd. Newer places have sprung up, rivaling the older in splendor.

MODEST STEIN.

Trailing Past Them Unperturbed in Their Travel Soiled Garb Are Hungry Motoring Parties"



The cheery warmth on winter days and the large, cool spaces in the summer have an unrivalled attraction.

The decorators were not afraid of being too gorgeous and the public has approved their generosity. A select few may affect contempt for its overpopularity, but they are never missed in the glad throng from the city and beyond that seek its comfort and luxury. "It is so typical of New York," sneered a Bostonian. "Truly," was the prompt reply, "and see how Boston and Philadelphia and Chicago flock to it."

Where They Crowd.

Up the avenue new hotels have invited women who complained of the too great popularity of the big place to take refuge in their semi-secluded elegance. These have their tea and luncheon crowds, although not comparable to those of their established magnificent rival. To find a second in popularity one must cross Broadway.

Here is a hotel hospitable to women's clubs, their public meetings and occasional banquets. In its dining rooms there are as many women as men. In the halls one meets them, wearing the air of being on their own territory.